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# All Over Town, They're Going Crazy

**D**oes the fact that Washington has the most psychotherapists mean that there are more mentally deranged people here than anywhere else? The answer is probably yes.

Dr. Arnold Frisher, a noted psychiatrist who has been practicing in D.C. for 40 years, and only takes the toughest cases, maintains that something happens to people after they stay in Washington awhile.

He said, "To put it in professional terms, 50 percent are nuttier than fruitcakes."

"How do you account for it?"

"Pressure, power and politics. Although most of them are normal people when they come here, it doesn't take long for them to lose all sense of reality. Let me give you an illustration. I have a patient who works for the Office of Management and Budget. He makes \$28,000 a year. Every time he comes to see me he says he has just chopped another billion dollars out of a government program. Then he bites his fingernails."

"Would that make him crazy?"

"No. But on each visit he claims he's brought the money with him and wants me to put it in my safe so Congress can't get their mitts on it."

"It sounds like he's suffering from exhaustion."

"Not or guilt," Dr. Frisher said.

"Six months ago he took a wheelchair away from his 80-year-old mother because he said she wasn't entitled to it on Medicare."

"Why would he feel guilty about that?" I asked.

"She calls him every morning and tells him not to worry about her because his father has offered to carry her to the supermarket on his back."

"What other troubled patients do you see?"

"I have a senator who took \$5 million from political action committees in the last election, but still believes he's his own man. Then there is a secretary of education who has a phobia about college kids, a Justice Department attorney for civil rights who loathes civil rights, a newspaper reporter who behaves like an animal, a lobbyist who claims to have 20 congressmen sewn up in his pocket and a CIA official who has to continually wash his hands every time he testifies about Nicaragua."

"Is that it?"

"No, I have this high official in the White House who maintains he has a mandate to spend a trillion dollars on new weapons to keep the peace."

"That wouldn't make him gonzo. The White House did win 49 states."

"My patient doesn't claim he has a mandate from the people—he says he has one from God."

"Haven't you ever had patients who talk to God?"

"Yes, but I have never had one who told me God wanted him to spend a trillion dollars. That's manic."

"At the same time, the way things seem to be going, a trillion dollars isn't too much to invest for security on earth."

"My patient doesn't want to spend it on earth. He wants to spend it in the sky."

"How is he going to do that?"

"He doesn't know. That is why he says he comes to me. He wants me to find the answer before people say he's flipped out."

"It sounds like a hopeless case. Why don't you fire him as a patient?"

"Because I think I have the solution. If I could hook up a network of lasers to 10 hydrogen bombs and explode them just as the moon passed over the Soviet Union, I could create a nuclear winter which would negate a first-strike capability, and then the Russians would come to me and say, 'Ain't going to go to war no more, ain't going to go to war no more, ain't g-o-i-n-g to go to war no mooorrrrrre.'"

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